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# ITALY AMERICA SOCIETY



## *C o n t e n t s*



Address by ~  
CHARLES EVANS HUGHES . . . . . *Page 5*

Address by ~  
ROBERT UNDERWOOD JOHNSON . . . . . *Page 10*

Address by ~  
FIORELLO H. LA GUARDIA . . . . . *Page 13*

Address by ~  
CHARLES P. SUMMERALL . . . . . *Page 17*

Address by ~  
C. GRANT LA FARGE . . . . . *Page 20*

Address by ~  
BARON ROMANO AVEZZANA . . . . . *Page 24*



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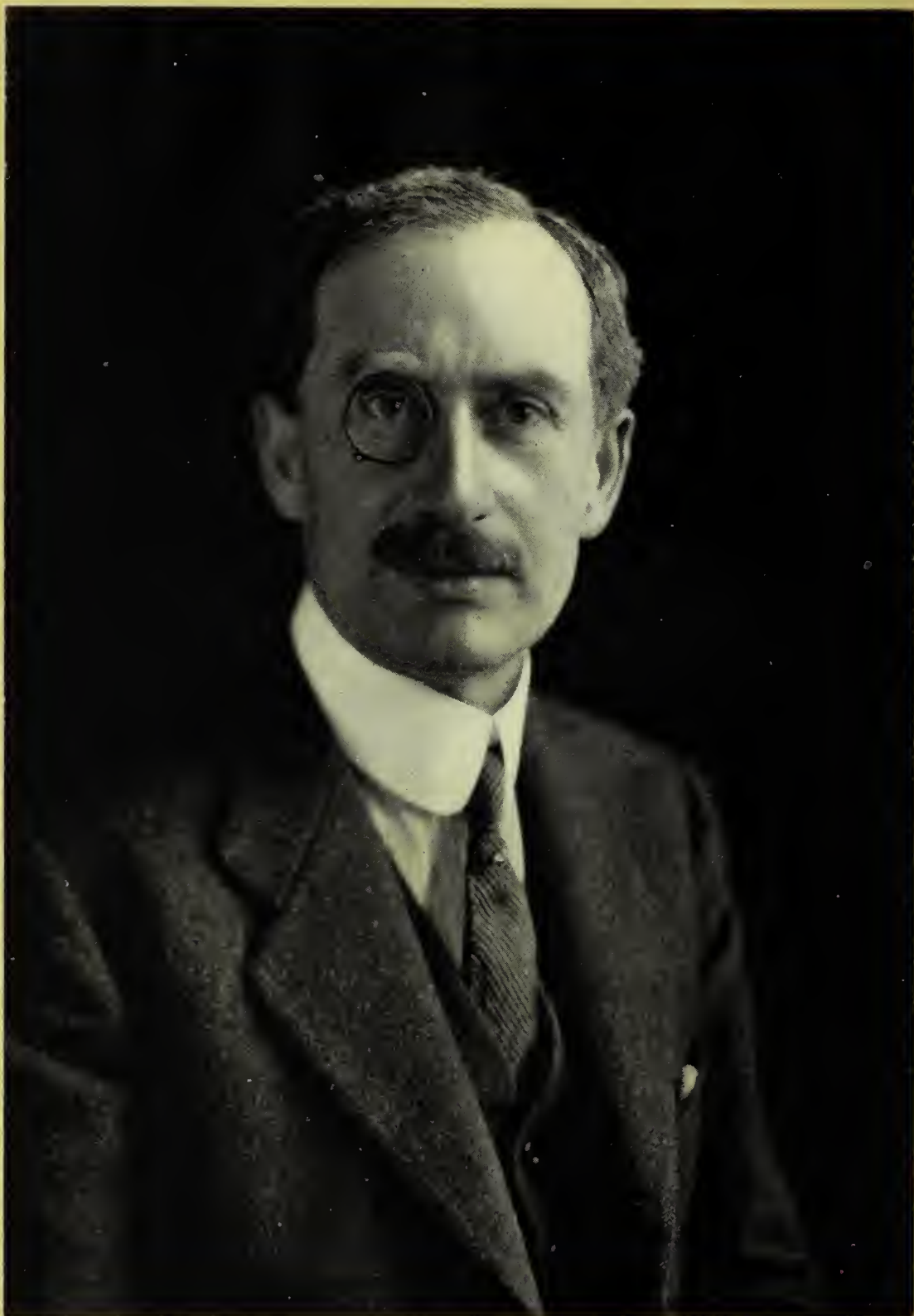
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*" . . . To create and maintain between the United States and Italy an international friendship based upon mutual understanding of their national ideals and aspirations and of the contributions of each to progress in science, art and literature, and upon coöperative effort to develop international trade."*

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HIS EXCELLENCY BARON ROMANO AVEZZANA  
Royal Italian Ambassador to the United States

Address  
by  
CHARLES EVANS HUGHES

*President of the Italy America Society*



WE have met to express, with opportune and unmistakable emphasis, our friendship for Italy. The Italy America Society was formed, not to encourage or tolerate a divided allegiance, but to strengthen the bonds of mutual appreciation, to attest our common sympathies, and to promote a wider recognition of the services and sacrifices of Italy in our united effort in the defense of liberty. As we review this struggle and the conditions which made possible a decisive victory, the sense of obligation must transcend even the natural sentiment of just pride. The lesson of the war is that of mutual dependence. The war would have been lost at the beginning had it not been for the military genius and indomitable spirit of France, which saved the world at the battle of the Marne. But the intrepidity of France would not have enabled her to survive had not Great Britain championed the cause of civilization, organizing in its relief the resources of the British Empire. Still, despite this aid, the cause would have been lost had not the United States realized



its duty and in the darkest hour come to the support of the Allies with the dauntless spirit of the new world. But America would have been too late and western civilization would today be dominated by the Prussian autocracy had it not been for the decisive action of Italy. There is glory enough for all, but let Italy not be denied her just share.

Let it not be forgotten that before the outbreak of the war, Italy refused to consent to Austria's proposal to attack Serbia. And when Austria in July 1914 gave her ultimatum to Serbia, Italy denied Austria's right thus to provoke a war and stated definitely her freedom from any obligation to support it. In the first fateful weeks of the war it was Italy's attitude of neutrality which permitted France to withdraw her troops from the Italian frontier, and thus to achieve a military position which alone made possible that margin of effectiveness essential to the victory at the Marne.

Italy entered the war on the side of the Allies at the imperious demand of her national soul. Italy could not remain neutral and be true to herself. The deepest sentiment of her people, instinct with the spirit of liberty and responsive to the appeal of national aspiration and obligation, forbade it. The action thus taken was worthy of a people which had been inspired by the unquenchable faith of Garibaldi and had been brought to the perception of national destiny through the unsurpassed statesmanship of Cavour. In her military activities, Italy at once displayed extraordinary powers of organization, both of man-power and supplies. By the most remarkable achievements in engineering and in every department of military effort, alike upon the glaciers of the Adamello

amid the peaks of the Dolomites, in the arena of the air, and upon the sea, she maintained her best tradition. I am informed that within a month after her entry into the war she had mobilized an army of 4,500,000 men, and that during the war there were called to the colors ninety per cent of those who were born between the years 1872 and 1900. Her losses were most severe; of these we may form some idea when it is said that those who were killed in battle and died from wounds and disease caused by the war were, in proportion to the population, twenty-five times as many as our own losses of the same sort.

The test of an army is not found in the flush of victory; the most severe test is after the demoralization of defeat, when transportation is paralyzed, when supplies and ammunitions are wanting, when whispers of treachery are on every side. And it was amid conditions of this sort that Italy maintained her line upon the Piave—a line which would not yield and could not be broken—an exhibition of unconquerable resistance which challenged the admiration of the world. We can never adequately express our obligation for these achievements, made possible as they were by the fortitude, the severe privations, and the incalculable sacrifices of the people of Italy. Let us not withhold from her the esteem and friendship that is her best reward. In the words of Meredith:

“She asks you but for faith,  
Your faith in her takes she  
As draughts of Heaven’s breath.”

Friendly international relations have only one sure basis and that is in mutual confidence and

amity. Without such friendships, formal arrangements are illusory; and, between friends, difficulties may be readily adjusted and essential co-operation assured. Fortunately, our traditions make it easy to enjoy friendly relations with Italy. We have always been in love with that enchanted land; we have always recognized the indebtedness of western civilization to the cultural influence of Italy in art, in letters, in science, in jurisprudence. We sympathize with the pride of Italy in the maintenance of national unity and a vigorous national life, and we recognize the promise of the permanence of that unity and the efficiency of the service that may be rendered to the world through her national spirit reinforced by racial pride and solidarity. Italy draws her inspiration from the past, glories in the masterful minds which have made her race illustrious; but she is not content to dwell upon past achievements: she is dreaming not of the past, but of the future. We rejoice with her that her talent, her skill and inventiveness are now being displayed in manifold forms in the face of her present economic problems. In the modern world of discovery and invention, she takes her old place among the nations, and Columbus and Galileo find their worthy successor in Marconi.

We have been taught by Italy in the past in the culture of the human spirit, and to-day we can learn from her the most necessary lesson of the present hour; that is, the lesson of thrift. The war would not have been won without Italy's frugality and capacity to serve and to utilize without unnecessary waste. If we could have today throughout our American population the thrift so conspicuously



displayed among the Italian people, America's economic problems would be solved.

We are natural friends, because our activities supplement each other. Italy needs our coal and iron and copper and other raw materials; we need her products and her workmanship. It should be easy for Italy and America to enjoy the benefits of co-operation. This should be carefully planned and not left to haphazard efforts. Our appreciation of what she has done and sacrificed should quicken our desire to understand her problems, and thus to secure an intimacy of commercial relation through which Italy may safeguard her economic independence and we may have the benefit of increased exchanges.

It is with this thought that we extend the most cordial welcome to the Italian Ambassador. He knows our institutions and our ideals. He is in exceptionally close touch with American opinion; he brings to his work special equipment of the highest order. We give him an unfeigned welcome with the hope that he will take the deepest satisfaction in the cordiality of his greeting, and with the assurance that his distinguished service will be a most important aid in drawing the two peoples more closely together, in securing a better understanding of the aims and ideals of each, and in promoting the lasting friendship which springs from mutual respect and confidence.



Address  
by  
ROBERT UNDERWOOD JOHNSON  
*American Ambassador to Italy*



MAY be pardoned for considering it a happy augury that my first public word since my selection by the President as a messenger of American good-will to the King and people of the Crowned Republic should be a word of welcome to the distinguished gentleman and experienced diplomat who, as Italy's messenger, comes to us, in his turn, with new messages of good will. It is also my first official service, for in the enforced and regrettable absence of Secretary Polk, I am particularly charged by him to present to the Ambassador and Ambassadors on this happy occasion the cordial greetings of the Department of State in behalf of the American people. Baron Romano comes to us with an established and brilliant record in his country's service at many capitals, and I am sure I am committing no indiscretion in saying that he has already in a special sense become *persona grata* in our official circles. His understanding of our people and his unaffected sympathy with us promise well for the continuation and the buttressing of the good relations between the two countries which we all so earnestly desire.

Mr. Ambassador, Madame Ambassadors, we give you the warmest greeting. America, like another Miranda, says to you: "here's my hand with my heart in it."

Your Excellency, it is not easy for one to measure words in speaking of your beloved country. Her beauty, her charm, her romantic history beget in us the ardor and adoration of a lover, and in endeavoring to find some adequate expression of our feeling we are thankful to Grant Allen for his whimsical tribute that all time spent outside of Italy is time wasted.

But the aesthetic aspects of the land of the poets do not blind us to her wealth of imperishable ideas and ideals, or to her enviable record of courageous and stalwart action. Not infrequently in all her troublous history has the harp been drowned by the trumpet. Yet at every step of her glorious progress she has been more than willing to pay the cost. And what has she not contributed to the world? Her first centuries gave us Law; the fifteenth and sixteenth witnessed the revival of Art and Learning; while the nineteenth brought into relief her incomparable devotion to Liberty,—a devotion which, in the midst of her struggle for independence, inspired Abraham Lincoln to say:

"I pray God to have Italy in his holy keeping and to vouchsafe to crown with success her noble aspirations."

And when we came to the greatest cataclysm of the ages, when the cup of trembling was at the lips of every nation, Italy's service to humanity in circumstances of colossal difficulty, showed a loftiness of motive, a heroism, a sacrifice and an



achievement that have met the hopes and expectations of her dearest friends. Her deeds of valor on mountain and sea are secure in the memory of a grateful world. In the long perspective of history she will take her place second to none among those who were bound with her in that firmest of bonds, —a common struggle for a spiritual cause.

This spiritual struggle of the nations is not yet finished and those who bore the brunt of it must rally to a new manifestation of the unselfishness that inspired it. In every land we see the same evidences of the natural and temporary reaction from stress of war, but these cannot obscure the fact that mankind is on a higher plane to-day than it has ever been. We are stronger and wiser for the anguish and the peril through which we have passed. Let us think of the crisis that the world has weathered. Let us take courage and dwell with noble expectancy upon the coming of the New Day. Its dawn is breaking and its sign of promise is altruism—the altruism that underlies friendship, democracy and Christianity, the altruism through which alone shall be realized our apocalyptic vision of peace and the brotherhood of man.





Address  
by  
FIORELLO H. LA GUARDIA  
*Acting Mayor of New York City*



IT IS rather unique that at a gathering of this kind, it has fallen to me, Mr. Ambassador, to give you the official welcome of the City of New York; and that, I must explain, is solely by reason of a Charter provision.

It was indeed gratifying to hear the response to the toasts proposed by your Chairman, first to America and then to Italy, with religious observance of the Eighteenth Amendment. Prohibition has this one advantage, however, in these times of stress: that when we go home after a function of this kind and receive a kiss from our wives, we know that it is a kiss of affection and not of investigation. But I am sure, your Excellency, that you will explain to your people that it came about through no fault of ours. And I must ask the Ambassador to Rome not to tell Premier Nitti about it, because the Premier may try it in Italy, and so spoil a perfectly good country.

You have some great speakers here this evening, and it is a source of genuine pride to me that I have the honor to sit next to one of America's

greatest generals, General Summerall. General Summerall is a soldier, and as such he probably will not tell you much about himself; but he is the American that put the "Art" into Artillery. The Summerall barrage made the Hindenburg barrage sound like a Sunday School corn-popping festival. In the Meuse-Argonne sector, about the first of November, it fell to General Summerall to have command at the front of the 5th Army Corps, and it was there that the greatest barrage of the world was placed successfully. And it was while watching from Hill 369 that General Summerall communicated to General Pershing, and General Pershing to General Foch, the news which made General Foch say, "La guerre est finie."

It is quite true, as your Chairman so well stated, that France saved the world at the battle of the Marne, and that England saved the world with its resources and its men; but had it not been for Italy in 1915, we should have found no war to go to in 1917.

This is indeed a great occasion, and I can assure you that the people of Italy will read of it tomorrow morning with deep gratification, because if there is one thing in this world that the Italian people want, it is the sincere friendship of the American people.

Italy needs our friendship at this time. Italy has been kept in an undecided state, has not been able to demobilize her armies entirely. Italy needs coal, needs iron, needs copper, needs raw materials. I think I understand the temperament of the Italian people, and with that understanding, I venture to say that were there not a pound of coal in Italy,

Italy would rather have a word of gratitude from America than a ton of coal.

Many people have questioned Italy's wisdom in reducing her position to writing. But it seems to me that recent events have fully demonstrated her wisdom in doing so. Were it not for an understanding clearly put in writing, I fear that the Province of Venice or the Province of Udine might be handed out to some unemployed Hapsburg.

I receive letters from my former comrades in arms on the other side. I receive letters from public officials and from merchants, and I assure you that the Italian people are united to a man, and they will stay united until all of the children of Italy come back to the mother land.

Mr. Ambassador, you have seen that the American people are really appreciative and grateful for the heroic conduct of the Italian people, and you, Mr. Johnson, can assure the Italian people on your arrival in Rome, that the American people are fond of the Italians. We love them. We appreciate their sacrifices. We understand the aspirations of Italy, and will stand by her gallant people until her aspirations are fully realized.



OFFICE OF  
THEODORE ROOSEVELT

NEW YORK OFFICE  
117 MADISON AVENUE

THE KANSAS CITY STAR

To Capt. Francesco M. Guardabassi  
Capt. 2<sup>d</sup> Reg. Sanction di Sardegna  
May 24th, 1918.

My dear Sir:

I wish it were possible for me to be at the meeting to-night. As that is not possible I send my greetings through you and I take this opportunity to pay homage to the high valor and lofty idealism that Italy has shown in this great struggle for humanity and civilization against Germany and her vassal confederate states, Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey. I most earnestly hope that Italy will be able to round out the great work of Victor Emanuel, Cavour, Mezzini and Garibaldi, and that the Italian speaking provinces of Austria will take their natural places in the Italian Kingdom. When Italy went into this war Russia was reeling backwards from the great blow delivered at her by the Germans, Austrians and Turks three years ago. Italy joined at a time when her adhesion was of the highest value to the allied cause. Since then she has fought with the utmost gallantry and efficiency. Her one great disaster was due to treacherous German intrigue of a kind against which this country must be as much on its guard as Italy herself. Her army and her people rallied from this disaster with the finest courage. Our country owes a deep debt of gratitude to Italy for what she has done, and I earnestly hope

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that we shall pay this debt as generously as possible and in as fine a spirit as Italy herself has shown. Of course the best way to pay it is to make our fighting force in Europe as large and as efficient as it can be made, and to do this in the shortest possible time.

Again renewing my expressions of homage to the Italian Nation and to the Italian Army for their brilliant and heroic record for the last three years, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Theodore Roosevelt

Facsimile of letter written by Colonel Theodore Roosevelt to Capt. F. M. Guardabassi, presented by the Italy America Society to H. M. the King of Italy, through the Royal Italian Ambassador



Address  
by  
GENERAL CHARLES P. SUMMERALL  
*United States Army*



HAVE neither the desire nor the ability to dispel the well-founded belief that a soldier is not a speaker. It would, however, be ungracious and, indeed, ungrateful, if I did not reaffirm among our own people the expressions of appreciation which it was my privilege to make in Italy of the many courtesies that were extended to me as an American Officer by the Italian Government and the Italian Army and Navy during my association with them.

Each one of you, no doubt, cherishes in imagination an Italy of your own, for she has charms that appeal to every taste. The Italy that I knew was a nation triumphant after a long and heart-breaking war; an Army and Navy burning with patriotism, yet modest and proud of their victories; and a people who bore cheerfully their privations and sacrifices for the sake of their love for the Motherland. In the brotherhood of sympathy that existed among all the armies which were battling for our common cause, friendships were formed and ties

were bound that will be lasting in the days of peace. They will not fail to help us to that mutual understanding and sincere desire for each other's welfare that are essential to the realization of the ideals for which we fought.

America is not unacquainted with the part that Italy took in the great conflict. From the moment that she refused to interpret the Triple Alliance as compelling her to aid the Central Powers in a war of aggression, until she wrung an Armistice from the enemy, she earned the gratitude of civilization. The brilliancy of her initial campaign was even surpassed by the great defensive victory of June, 1918, and the decisive offensive of October and November. Throughout the campaigns her armies fought with courage, skill and devotion, not only against a determined enemy, but against odds of nature that can be fully understood only by those who overcame them. The Asiago Plateau, Mount Grappa and the Montello will take their places in history with other names that are synonymous with valiant deeds and heroic achievement. Her Navy was no less distinguished in the operations at sea.

The story of her sacrifice is tragically told in a death roll of 468,000 with more than twice that number wounded. More than half a million were totally or partially disabled from wounds or sickness contracted at the front. She mobilized five millions from a man-power of less than nine millions, and none of her population were spared the privations and want that did not end with the cessation of hostilities.

With characteristic sensitiveness to kindness, much was heard in Italy in appreciation of the help

extended by the American Red Cross and other aid societies. From one source, especially, came grateful acknowledgment of the generosity of certain American women who sent milk and other necessities for the sick children. These instances but point the way to even greater opportunities that exist for our people to give expression to the genuine friendship that unites our countries by assisting in the restoration of the industrial prosperity of the nation. Above all, we shall be wise to promote such organizations as the Italy America Society and to encourage the expression of a national feeling of good will that has only been intensified by the associations of the war.



Address  
by  
C. GRANT LA FARGE  
*Secretary of the American Academy in Rome*



IT IS not strange that the purpose of the Italy America Society should strongly appeal to the Trustees of the American Academy in Rome. To them, it cannot fail to appear as a happy conjuncture, this great gathering of the friends of Italy in honor of her gracious and welcome representative at the moment when the Academy commemorates its twenty-fifth anniversary.

How better could we celebrate the growth of that institution consecrated to the arts and higher culture, than by a reunion designed to promote closer sympathy and comprehension between our eager and adolescent spirit and that wonderful country, ripe with the wisdom and beauty of the ages, vigorous with the springs of a youth renewed by national unity, to which we ever turn for the source of the inspiration our Academy seeks to instill?

In just this sense, because of just this significance, we must feel that Rome merits perhaps more precisely today than ever before, her proud title of the Eternal City. For it is not merely that she has stood, despite so many vicissitudes, for near three



thousand years upon her seven hills. Deeply moving to the human mind as is her history, it takes on now a new meaning.

Over all the world, over this newer land that still remains an experiment in democracy, as well as over the older peoples, broods the dark spirit of unrest, of bitter discontent. Never was there greater need, in all the clamor and confusion of discordant tongues, for firm ability to discriminate between sound and sense, between specious sophistry masquerading as intellectual freedom, and genuine vision that points out new paths of human progress; progress in social welfare, progress in man's relations with his brothers, progress in science, in letters, and the arts.

Upon those seven hills of Rome, there and in the other towns of Italy, throughout the long, slow centuries, there are but few experiments that have not been tried. The record is there, for him who knows how to seek, of all the passions, the aspirations, the hopes and failures and successes, of all the sins and all the sacrifices, the follies, wisdom, and nobilities of mankind.

But though knowledge of the record will show him the deep truth of the old saying that there is no new thing beneath the sun, it will also tell him that the old things forever present themselves in novel guise and that of these new guises we need not be afraid, for what is good in them will live and the dross will perish. So will he become possessed of intellectual charity; so will he be the fellow-citizen of the great Roman who declared: "Nothing human do I deem foreign to me."

There is nothing in derogation of the eminent man of letters who is about to represent our coun-

try as the Ambassador of the United States in Italy, in this recent remark of a distinguished man of affairs: "The American Academy in Rome is the best ambassador the United States has in Europe."

For in the first place, the Academy in Rome is *not* a school. It is the only thing of the kind this country owns and the only one it can expect to own. It is the logical and fitting culmination of the best instruction any school can give.

Those who go to the Academy do not do so to learn mere technique. Whatever our various schools and universities have to give them must be theirs before we even consider them. They have got to prove worthy, not to receive desirable assistance because it will benefit them, but to be given those opportunities, those advantages, which may be expected so to develop them that they will become positive factors in raising the level of our national art and culture.

Do not suppose that for them, Italy is a mere museum, a country whose sole interest lies in days long gone. No, not that. They learn her tongue, they meet her people, they make friends. They meet Italian erudition, Italian genius; they become conscious of her continuing achievement in science, in literature, music, poetry, and the drama. And if they realize that Italy has shared the common lot of all the western world in having industrialism, for the time being, place its blight upon the fine arts, they also learn that the artistic soul of her people indeed has not perished and is entitled to share the common hope of a day of renaissance.

There is yet another thing they learn, a very important thing. The Latin and the Anglo-Saxon

minds work in very dissimilar ways, even to the same ends. Those who come back to this country from life in the Academy, do so with awakened understanding and appreciation of the Italian mind, and hence with capacity to help their people at home to that understanding. They have also, while in Italy, had the opportunity to do something similar in explaining us to the Italians. In other words, we have a permanent medium for that best and most desirable element in international good will, the exchange of cultivated minds.

I hope I have made it clear that there is entire harmony between the aims and the spirit of the American Academy in Rome and the purpose of the Italy America Society. I feel sure that our Trustees will support me in saying that if there be ways within our obvious limitations in which we, the elder organization, may properly aid the Society, to do so will be to us a source of deep contentment.





Address  
by  
H. E. BARON ROMANO AVEZZANA  
*Italian Ambassador to the United States*



PLEASE permit me to express to the Italy America Society and to its illustrious President my most sincere thanks for the honor of the magnificent welcome which you have accorded me. As your manifestation of cordial sentiment is tendered not to my humble self, but rather to my country and to the August Sovereign whom I represent, I address myself to you as the messenger of Italy and bring to all of you the greetings of the Italian people.

Never have I regretted more deeply than I do tonight the fact that I have not a complete mastery of your beautiful language, in order that I might be able to answer with more appropriate words what has been said by the honorable speakers who have preceded me. Should I attempt to do so, I might run the risk of finding myself in a labyrinth without exit.

Please, therefore, be kind enough to forgive me if my speech, which is written, and thus necessarily lacking in color, follows its own course. It is, however, closely linked with the addresses to which we have just listened in the nobility of pur-



pose which unites us here tonight, of reaffirming and promoting the indestructible friendship between the United States and Italy.

But let me express my thanks to Mr. Johnson, your Ambassador to Rome, for the words he has conveyed to me on behalf of the Department of State. I am very much touched, also, by the tribute that has been addressed to the Italian Army by such a gallant soldier as General Summerall. Mr. Hughes has added to his marvelous speech a gift of incomparable price, in handing me a letter that one of your greatest statesmen, Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, has written, on the valor and idealism shown by Italy in the great struggle for humanity and civilization. I will not fail to convey this letter to the King, who on many occasions has expressed his admiration for Colonel Roosevelt, and who will receive it with profound appreciation as the testimony of the American people through one of the most representative of their citizens.

My thanks go equally to Mr. LaGuardia for his brilliant speech and to Mr. LaFarge, who spoke with so much eloquence on the work of the American Academy in Rome.

I am afraid that I am going to take advantage of your time and patience in bringing before you many matters which are a daily cause of pre-occupation among us.

Certainly I should have preferred those brighter subjects that are, and always will remain, the golden threads which link America and Italy.

It would have given me great pleasure to speak about Abraham Lincoln, and the other great American statesmen who hailed our unity and had con-

fidence in our future, or to pay my tribute of admiration to such men as John Greenleaf Whittier, who, while the most typically American of your poets, was at the same time the most Italian in feeling, owing to the deep comprehension of the Italian Risorgimento that inspired his lines. Whittier, indeed, affords signal proof of the idealistic affinity of the two nations. He had no knowledge of the Italian language, he had never been in the country, had not made a special study of the classics, and yet no one had a truer insight into the Italians.

In the presence of the founders of the American Academy in Rome, I would also have liked to speak of Charles McKim, Daniel H. Burnham, Whitney Warren, Augustus St. Gaudens, Daniel French, John LaFarge, Edwin Blashfield, and Siddons Mowbray, whose vigorous personalities were inspired by Italian art.

This subject would have been most fitting, as you are sending to Rome as your Ambassador a poet and writer of great talent, Robert Underwood Johnson, who is also a friend of Italy.

Let us hope that when we all meet again, the clouds that linger in the sky will have passed away, so that we can once more give our thoughts and interests to those manifestations of the intellect that form the ornament, the pride, and the highest delight of cultivated nations.



Since the chief aim, Ladies and Gentlemen, of the Italy America Society of New York and its sister branch in Rome, is that of promoting a great-

er knowledge of Italy in America and of America in Italy, I will refer to some data which I think will be of interest.

Under the pressure of the great social and economic problems which are now stirring the world, many persons already think of the war as an event of the past. But do we not follow in the furrow that our fathers have ploughed for us? Is there any act or phase which can be said to be independent of past events? Can we understand facts without knowing their causes? Never has it been more true that the dead command the living. And they are glorious dead!

We are the children of the Great War! The movement which it has impressed upon humanity may not be uniform, but it will be felt by all nations. The particular direction each one will take will largely depend on the motive and spirit which moved each to participate in the conflict. It is therefore essential to determine the position of each nation at the beginning of and throughout the world tragedy.



One of the legends that have been circulated is that Italy, moved by a desire for territorial aggrandizement and by imperialistic aims, waited to enter the war until she could form an opinion as to which side would be victorious. No one in Italy thought it worth while to refute such an allegation, as no one believed that it could be spread or accepted. If this had been Italy's aim, she would have taken sides with Germany, who offered her a great deal more than is stipulated in the now famous Treaty



of London. Italy entered the war, although not well prepared, at a moment when the fortunes of the Entente seemed most desperate; the moment when Russia was suffering a memorable defeat at Przemyśl, and when Serbia, required by a military convention to attack Austria, failed to do so.

Italy entered the war for the principle of liberty championed by the Western Powers, a principle which was in perfect harmony with her national aspirations, for the completion of Italian unity and the security of her frontiers. No condition has ever been imposed by Italy which is in contradiction with the principles of liberty and justice, and which does not represent a legitimate national aspiration, a proven historical right, or an impelling precaution for security.

No one can accuse of imperialism a country which, afflicted throughout the centuries by foreign conquests and subjected to repeated invasion, desires at last to reunite all her children and to place against new incursions that barrier of mountains with which Nature has surrounded her.



Another legend is that our war was an easy one against a cowardly enemy, and that our victory was the fruit of the rivalry between the various nationalities which made up the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The Austrian Army was one of the strongest in the world, second only to the armies of Germany and France. In any case, it was double that of Italy. The Austrian soldiers fought against us with indisputable valor, and dissensions of nation-



alities did not affect their fighting spirit. All of them—Austrians, Hungarians, Slovenes and Croats—rivalled one another in ferocity.

The effort we were called upon to make was enormous. Out of a population of thirty-six millions, we had to call to the colors twenty-six classes, that is, five million six hundred and fifteen thousand men, all from Italy proper, since we used no Colonial troops.

In order to appreciate the significance of these figures, one must bear in mind that in a male population of seventeen millions, there are only nine millions who are adult and not too old. Upon the three and a half millions who remained at home, fell, throughout four years, the entire weight of the nation and the duty of providing for the Army.



The fight was hard. We sustained the loss of about 500,000 dead, 1,000,000 wounded, 220,000 badly mutilated or totally disabled, 570,000 discharged from the Army because of infirmities contracted in the service. Including the sick and the wounded, 5,000,000 men were treated in our hospitals.

These figures are sufficiently eloquent to show that the war was fought with valor against a well trained and formidable foe.

We must also consider the ground upon which it was fought. Our soldiers were called upon to fight in the marshes of the lower Piave. On the scorching Carso they had not sufficient drinking water. Upon the Alps they lived in the midst of perennial ice and blinding snow.

We fought fourteen great battles. We won them all excepting one—Caporetto.

But what page is more beautiful than that of the wonderful stand on the Piave? The whole nation stood up as one man. The 1902 Class—boys of 18 years—left for the front under a shower of flowers and with the blessings of their mothers. On the shores of the sacred river they offered their young lives to stay the enemy; and they stopped the advance. Caporetto was avenged by two bloody battles on the Piave, and finally by the outstanding battle of Vittorio Veneto, which destroyed, together with the Austrian Army, Italy's age-long enemy—the Hapsburg Monarchy.



There is still another legend that we must correct.

Many believe that in the second part of the war, that is, after Caporetto, we were only able to recuperate our strength by the help of our Allies.

France and England, who have covered themselves with so much glory on their own battlefields, will not contribute to such a charge, which, had it come to their knowledge, their chivalrous sentiment would have been the first to rectify.

Now, the first battle of the Piave, the one by which the enemy was arrested in his advance, was fought by the Italian Army *alone*. The French and English troops which had been dispatched to our aid could not, for various reasons, enter into action. The Allied troops fought side by side with ours for the first time in the *second* battle of the Piave in June, 1918. They consisted of the 14th British

Corps, with three divisions, and the 12th French Corps with two divisions. In the final battle of Vittorio Veneto, three English and two French divisions participated. These troops always fought with vigor, in accordance with their glorious traditions, but, considering the smallness of their number, they could not have had decisive weight in the memorable and colossal battle.

Tribute must also be paid to the valiant work of the brave American aviators who served with our armies, and to the magnificent service of the Red Cross, by which America rendered the greatest assistance to our forces in the field of battle.

The Italian Army was also fighting in France, with two divisions which held positions at Bligny, near Rheims, besides 100,000 men of the reserves who worked in the French trenches on the firing line. In Macedonia, the 65th Division, known as such only for reasons of command, was composed of 65,000 men. Italy also fought in Albania, thus insuring the flank and communications of the Allied Army operating in Macedonia.



You are better informed of the actions of the Italian Navy. It had to fight against an enemy always ambushed in the hundred ports and hundred islands of Dalmatia. One of its most beautiful pages was the work of saving the depleted Servian Army. Under continuous attack, the Italian Navy rescued 250,000 Serbs, both soldier and civilian, who found the most brotherly shelter in our midst.

In order to give you an idea of our losses at sea, it is not superfluous to recall that our mer-



chant marine lost 59 per cent of its tonnage by submarine warfare—a percentage higher than that suffered by France, which was 40 per cent, or by England, which was 43 per cent.

I remind you of all this because, as we esteem highly the opinion of the American people, we desire them to realize that Italy, both in her entering the war and in the part she actually played in it, fully accomplished her duty. In this, she did not more than her allies and associates, but certainly not less.



One point, remarkable at the time and significant for the future, was that Italy, in spite of the smallness of her means and the scarcity of raw materials, succeeded in building up a war industry which commanded great respect.

And, looking forward to the future, I would like to call particular attention to the special qualities of ingenuity, adaptability, and love of work, that characterize our people. These qualities are known to you. There is no great work in America in which our emigrants have not had their honorable share.

With the constant increase in the technical ability of the directing classes and in the skill of the workers, we feel confident that an industrial renaissance is in progress, the awakening of which those of you who have travelled in Italy have already had occasion to witness.

Italy has not much land suitable for cultivation, and has but scanty mineral resources. Barren lands, however, a Greek philosopher said, produce



strong men. Such are ours. If at present we do not possess in our coffers strong reserves of gold, our circulation will be guaranteed by a much more precious and enduring reserve—that of a people determined to work.

In the midst of the ruins produced by war, we rely for reconstruction on the strength and goodwill of our workers. And these are not mere words designed to make an impression.



In referring to Italy, telegraphic agencies—in the belief that they are conforming to the expectations of the foreign public—indulge in reports of earthquakes, eruptions, strikes, epidemics, and the like. The idea consequently finds credence that our country, in the midst of spasmodic convulsions both of nature and mankind, has practically arrested all her activities. Nothing is further from the truth. The constant increase of Italian production, which during the war was concentrated upon war needs, resumed its course, one might say, on the morrow of the day of the Armistice. If we take the figure 100 to represent the average monthly export in the two years preceding the war—1913 and 1914—we find that in 1918, shortly after the cessation of hostilities, it had increased to 107; in January, 1919, to 124; and so on until the following October, when it reached 304—that is to say, treble the average pre-war exportation. These are the figures published by the Supreme Economic Council.

No better proof could be given of the fact that, notwithstanding all that has been printed in the papers, Italy has gone back to work in real earnest.

But the expenses met in the course of the war, the decrease in agricultural production, the constant advance in the price of raw materials and in shipping charges, have obliged all governments to contract enormous debts, and to increase greatly the emission of currency, while the gold reserves have been becoming disproportionate to the paper circulation.

At the end of 1919, the Italian debt amounted to 88 billion lire, 20 billion of which was due to the Allies and the United States. This figure includes also State and Bank notes for about 13 billion lire.

Exceptional and bold measures were necessary to meet a situation which, a few years ago, we should have been unable to conceive. The Italian Government with the help of all classes of the population, has already resorted to them. No other country has enacted such radical taxation. But even before the legislation just enacted, the revenue of our budget for the year 1919-1920 was raised from 3 billions—the pre-war figure—to 9,411,000.

With the foresight and prudence which is characteristic of Italian finance, the Government estimates that the whole budget for 1920-1921 will register a deficit of about two billions, while the next fiscal year will reach almost perfect balance, meeting, of course, interest on all debts, and also providing for a vast program of industrial encouragement. This will include a new impetus to shipping, the construction of great public works—chief among which will be the transformation into motive power of the abundant water energy in which Italy is rich from the Alps to Calabria. We count

on adding 2,000,000 horse power to the 3,500,000 that we already possess, while projects contemplate an addition of 3,000,000.

In order to deflate currency, the Government has issued an internal loan which has already yielded 16 billion lire and which, it is hoped, will reach 20 billions.

Work, taxation and internal loans—this is the advice that Senator Glass, before leaving the Treasury Department, addressed to Europe. They were contained in a notable recent letter to Mr. Homer Ferguson, President of the United States Chamber of Commerce.

In Italy, we have already followed this course. If provisions of an internal character are sufficient for solving the world's economic crises this would be—so far as we are concerned—almost solved.

But the interdependence of nations, which is the salient phenomenon of modern economy, has now become even more apparent since the war has arrested their production, destroyed their wealth, and upset—with the natural depreciation of money—the flux and reflux of commerce.

This complex order of economic relations is reflected in the exchange. Gentlemen, let us welcome the exchange as something salutary. It can only lead the populations of the debtor nations to desist from acquiring what they cannot pay for. The exchange is the fever, the indispensable reaction of the organism towards health.

Of course, there is also the danger that the exchange should reach such heights as to hamper for several years economic relations between Europe and America.



It is, however, altogether inconceivable that the two great continents, representing such glorious and ancient civilizations, should remain inert while contemplating ruin on the one hand and grievous damage on the other, trusting in time alone to effect the restoration to normal conditions. Such an attitude is not responsive to the tendencies of the age and the possession by the nations of powerful organizations for the co-ordination and direction of individual effort.

I view, therefore, with great sympathy and confidence the efforts that are being made to bring together a conference of competent business men of the various nations for the purpose of tackling these questions and pointing out to the uncertain business world the road it should follow.

This is not a political question. Had it been such, I should probably have avoided it. Political questions, unfortunately, often tend to divide, since every one considers his own viewpoint as the only true one. At this very moment, a courteous controversy is being carried on between the two shores, in which Italy has the misfortune to be one of the principal interlocutors.

We feel certain that the question will receive a solution becoming that spirit of brotherhood which has sustained the Allies and the United States throughout the war, which has been cemented with blood on the battlefields, and which has won victory for all of us. But this controversy gives me occasion to reaffirm in the most solemn manner, the great respect, the profound and sincere friendship, and the admiration which the people of Italy never fail to entertain towards the people of



the United States, with whom they feel themselves in close unison of ideals, and with whom they have identity of principles in democracy, order and liberty. For Italy you will remain always the great people who entered the war at a decisive moment, and did so with such impetus and generosity as to merit the everlasting gratitude of future generations.



Gentlemen, we have the great privilege tonight of a magnificent representation of ladies. This brings to my mind the splendid part that women played during the war, and I cannot close without saying one word on this subject. Women in Italy worked on the land, in the factories, and in all public services. Nor can I be forgetful of the admirable contribution of the American women. In Italy, we felt their presence in times of stress, and many distinguished American women worked side by side with Italian women in all deeds of mercy. The sympathy they showed for Italy during the war will not be forgotten. With their rapid understanding and grasp of essential truths, American women will play an equally important part in cementing the friendship of our two countries now and in years to come.





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